

COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION

This is the first in a series of crime prevention suggestions offered to you by the Milton-Freewater Police Department. Citizens have growing concern over the rate of crime in our city, and have expressed a desire to have some general safety and prevention tips published as a service to our community.

To start with, remember there is no magic formula that guarantees crime will stop. Society as a whole is the victim of drug driven crime, at the hands of perhaps the greatest cowards known: petty criminals. Police are only a part of the crime prevention equation. It really takes a more global, community oriented approach to make a noticeable and positive impact on crime. It takes people, both police and non-police, to truly make a difference.

Home safety is a major issue these days. There some simple things you can do to lessen the possibility that your home will be next in line to be visited by the criminal element.

1. Exterior lighting. Cowards, like vandals, often need to do their cowardly deeds under the cover of darkness. By making sure your home has effective exterior lighting, you can greatly lessen your chances at becoming a victim of vandalism. Motion sensitive lighting is

relatively inexpensive, and provides a deterrent to the criminal element.

2. The appearance and perception of being at home. Vandals, thieves, and burglars are the opportunists of the criminal world. They usually strike when they know or sense that no one is around to catch them in the act. By always giving the impression that you are home, you can minimize your likelihood of being victimized. Many people always have a television or a radio on in their home to give the impression of occupancy. Most burglars are reluctant to enter an occupied building or residence, so leaving such sound producing devices running can deter this type of crime. Another good "noise maker" is an alert dog left inside the residence while you're gone, or even in an attached garage. Many criminals don't savor the notion of being attacked by a four legged foe.

3. Watch out for each other. Nothing beats concerned and attentive neighbors looking out for one another. This concept is called neighborhood watch, and is a valuable tool at everyone's disposal.

Next month: What we can do to deter and possibly even prevent graffiti.